

A NEW RECORD OF *SCHNABELIA OLIGOPHYLLA* H.-M. (VERBENACEAE) FROM SOUTHERN CHINA

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From the Edinburgh Herbarium I received an incertae sedis of herbaceous, completely aphyllous habit, but with remarkably 4-winged stems, bearing traces of small bracts below the decussate branchings. The flowers were beyond anthesis, two opposite on each constricted node; pedicels short but distinct, narrowly winged, bearing 2 minute bracteoles, thickened to the apex in a kind of ribbed hypanthium. No corolla or ovary could be found on our material, only a calyx of 4-5 narrow acute sepals, ca 5-6 mm long, standing out star-wise. The master set at Edinburgh had obviously a fruit or ovary, the notes on this reading: "Ovary 4 (or 2 dividing into 4); seeds apparently 2, attached basally."

The 4-angled stems, chorisepalous calyx, superior ovary, and (incomplete) description of the pistil led me to think of some sympetalous group, but the few ovules cq. seeds pointed to either *Labiatae* or *Verbenaceae*. Aphyllous plants are, however, rare in these families and those mentioned in the 1st edition of the *Pflanzenfamilien* did not fit. However, Dr. S. T. Blake, to whom I showed the plant, remembered an aphyllous Queensland *Verbenacea*, *Sparattothamnella juncea* (A. Cunn. ex G. Don) Briq. which indeed possesses also a star-shaped calyx in fruit and nearly winged stems. This stimulated attention towards *Verbenaceae*. In looking up the monograph of the Chinese *Verbenaceae* by Dr. Chien P'ei (1932) the only (monotypic) genus not known to me was *Schnabelia oligophylla* H.-M. of which the specific epithet sounded promising. But here the leaves were described as divided and only obsolete mention was made of the most prominent feature of our plant, viz. the remarkably winged stems.

A loan of the type from Vienna, by courtesy of Prof. Rechinger, proved, however, without a shade of doubt, that this was it. Obviously both the lower divided leaves and the upper reduced ones are fugacious or may occasionally be absent.

The localities of the sheets at hand are in three adjacent provinces of southern China, but scarcity of material may be due to rarity of the plant which was described very late.

Schnabelia oligophylla H.-M., Anz. Ak. Wiss. Wien **58** (1921) 92, fig.; Chien P'ei, Mem. Sc. Soc. China **1**, no. 3 (1932) 182 (Contr. Biol. Lab. Sc. Soc. China, bot. ser., **7**: 213); H.-M., Symb. Sin. **7** (1936) 909.

CHINA: HUNAN: Lengschuidjiang, along Tsi-Diang R., above Hsinhwa, 200 m, on limestone, among shrubs, *Handel-Mazzetti* 11967 (diar. 2475) (Vienna, holotype), fl rose with dark markings, 29-5-1918; also stream Lududsae (Laodao) between Hsinhwa and Wukang (H.-M. loc. cit.). KWANGSI: N. Kwangsi, Lion Hill, 25 li N of Luchen, 300 m, tufted herb in deep ravine, very rare, R. C. Ching 5428 (Vienna), fl purplish, 28-5-1928. KWEI-

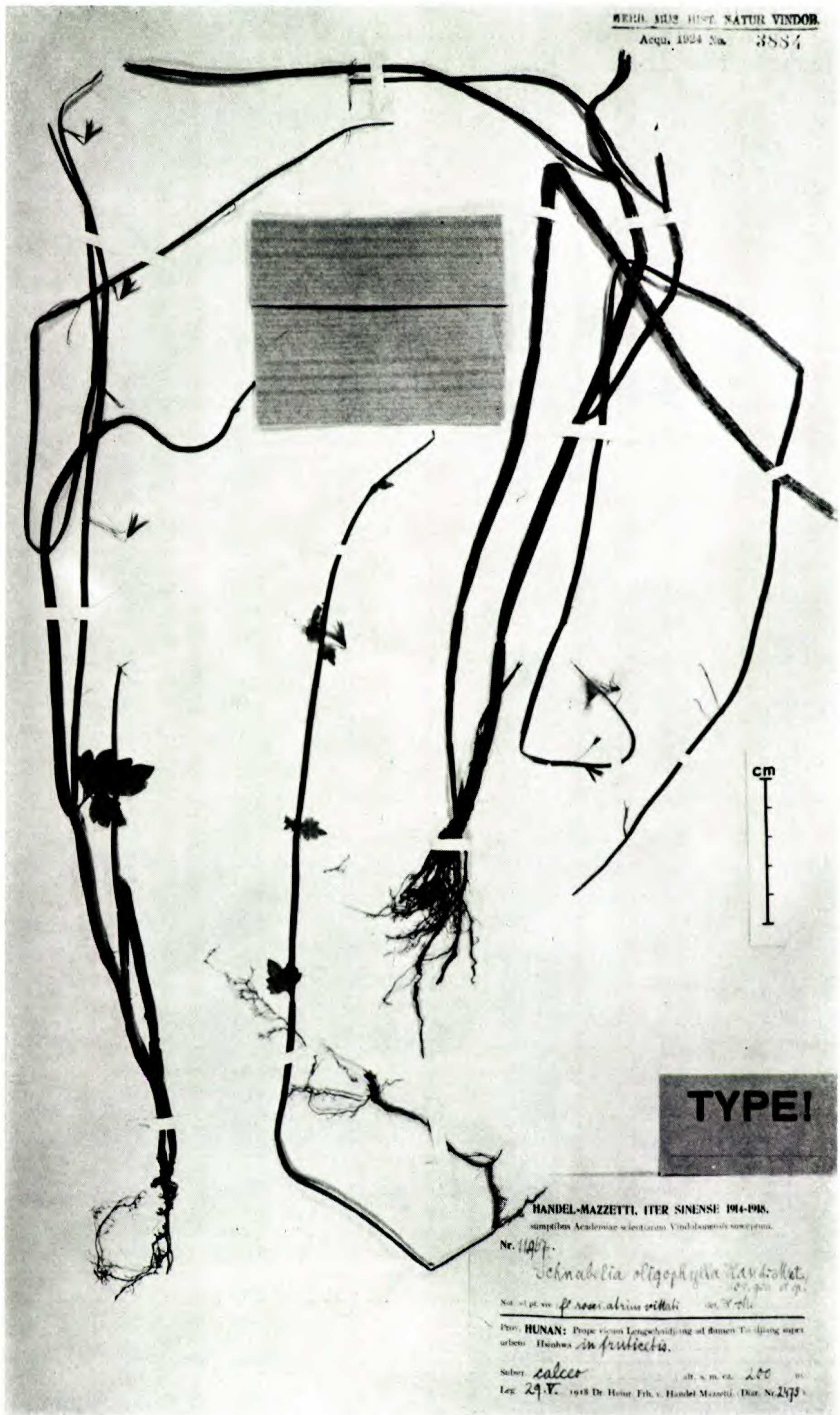


Fig. 1. Holotype of *Schnabelia oligophylla* H.-M.

CHOW: "grotte de sortie d'un petit ruisseau entre Kiang Long and . . . , *J. Esquirol* 538 (Edinburgh) in herb. Léveillé, June 1905; "la nomme en chinois ku ku t'ay est là donné aux cochons. Pour moi je l'ai aperçu là seulement."

Chien P'ei, who did not see material, had some doubt about the disposition in the *Verbenaceae*, but the *Clerodendrum*-like corolla, bifid style, nerved calyx lobes, and paucity of seed agree well with this family.

Handel-Mazzetti (1936) assumed that *Ching* 5428 might be a different species, but I believe only one species is concerned.

It would be very interesting to know whether or not *Schnabelia* has any true affinity with the Queensland *Sparattothamnella*. Obviously *Schnabelia* is a hygrophyte rather than a xerophyte.